BEN REILLY: THE SCARLET SPIDER

DAVID SLINEY ARAÚJO

DAMNATION

MARVEL

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DAMNATION

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Years ago, Miles Warren, one of Peter Parker's college professors, stole a sample of Peter's genetic material and used it to create a perfect clone of **SPIDER-MAN**. With all of Peter's memories, the clone fled. Created, not born, and without an identity of his own, he gave himself a new name and made his own way in the world as **BEN REILLY: THE SCARLET SPIDER!**

Following a misguided turn as a super villain, **BEN REILLY** has made a home for himself in Las Vegas. Becoming the **SCARLET SPIDER** once more, he has been trying to be a better man. But lately, Ben's choices have been less than heroic. After a visit from Lady Death, he learned that his very soul is now in jeopardy.

The people of Las Vegas have struggled to rebuild their lives in the wake of Hydra Cap's assault during **SECRET EMPIRE**. Dr. Stephen Strange, the Sorcerer Supreme and Master of the Mystic Arts, has decided to use his mighty magical powers to repair the city. But there are forces at work that threaten to plunge Vegas into a new nightmare.

Will the city of sin be redeemed or face...

DAMNATION

NOTE: THE EVENTS OF **BEN REILLY #15** TAKE PLACE DURING **DOCTOR STRANGE: DAMNATION #1** AND **#2.**

BAR
7
BAR
7
BAR
7

WHY DID I DO IT? WHY DID I LET MYSTERIO OFF THE HOOK SO EASILY?

INSTEAD OF KICKING IN HIS FRONT DOOR, I SHOULD HAVE CALLED THE COPS ON HIM. ONE ANONYMOUS TIP AND THEY'D HAVE JUST SHOWN UP, CAUGHT HIM OFF GUARD AND SEARCHED HIS PLACE.

AND, ABRACADABRA-- *MYSTERIO* DISAPPEARS.

SCREW IT, BEN. YOU KNOW WHY YOU DID IT.

BECAUSE YOU IDENTIFIED WITH HIM, THAT'S WHY.

A GUY TRYING TO TURN HIS LIFE AROUND. AT LEAST, THAT'S HIS STORY.

HELL, FOR ALL I KNOW, HE'S SKEDADDLED OUT OF VEGAS TO SET UP SHOP SOMEWHERE ELSE.

WELL, THAT'S GOOD, TOO, I GUESS. THEN HE'S OUT OF MY HA--

WAIT A MINUTE...

WHERE'S AUNT JUNE? THIS TIME OF DAY, SHE'S *ALWAYS* PLAYING THAT MACHINE.

BETTER GO UPSTAIRS AND CHECK ON HER.

JUNE? IT'S BEN. ARE YOU IN THERE?

JUNE? ARE YOU OKAY--?

HI.

HUH?

COME IN, BEN. I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU.

UHM... HAVE WE MET?
NO.
OOOKAY. AND YOU ARE...?
I'M JEZEBEL.
WELL, THAT'S A NAME WITH A HEL...
HECK OF A BACKGROUND.
OH, BELIEVE ME, I KNOW. PLEASE, SIT DOWN.
SO, ARE YOU RELATED TO JUNE OR...
NO. AGAIN, PLEASE SIT. I NEED YOU TO SIT DOWN AND LISTEN.
WHERE IS SHE?
MY EMPLOYERS HAVE HER.
SHE'S...WAIT, *WHAT?!* YOUR *EMPLOYERS?!*
THAT'S CORRECT. NOW BEFORE YOU FLY OFF THE HANDLE--
FLY OFF THE HANDLE?! AN ELDERLY WOMAN IS MISSING! IS THIS SOME KIND OF DAMNED *JOKE* TO YOU?!
KIDDO, YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHO YOU'RE SCREWING WITH!
OH, I'M PRETTY SURE I DO.
NOW... SIT--

--DOWN AND LISTEN!

WUUMF

OKAY.

I'M LISTENING.

DIVA, I'M WORRIED ABOUT THE CASINO. BETWEEN THE RESIDENTS WHO WERE DISPLACED FROM CAPTAIN AMERICA'S ATTACK LIVING IN THE GAMING HALL TO THE DONATION YOU JUST MADE TO THE LOCAL VETERANS CENTER, WE'RE LOW ON CASH.

I APPRECIATE YOUR CONCERN, SLATE. BUT I'VE JUST BOOKED A MAGIC ACT THAT'LL GET US ***INTERNATIONAL HEADLINES.*** THE REFUGEES WILL BE BACK IN THEIR HOMES SOON ENOUGH AND THE CHECK TO THE VETERANS CENTER WAS A FAVOR FOR A FRIEND.

IS IT THE SCARLET SPIDER? IT IS, ISN'T IT?

THE CASINO CAN'T BANKROLL YOUR BOYFRIENDS.

I OWE THE SPIDER A GREAT DEBT. BUT THAT'S WHERE OUR RELATIONSHIP ENDS. NOT THAT IT'S ANY CONCERN OF YOURS.

THERE'S ONE THING THAT'S ALWAYS BEEN CONSISTENT WITH YOU, DIVA.

YOU'RE A LOUSY LIAR.

COME ON. WHAT'S--?

WHOOAAAA!

EARTHQUAKE!

RRMMMMBBRBLLLLLL

WHAT THE HELL?!

OH, DEAR.

THINGS ARE MOVING FASTER THAN I EXPECTED.

CLIMB ONTO THE WALL, BEN. YOU WON'T SKID AROUND THAT WAY.

I KNOW YOU'RE THE SCARLET SPIDER. DON'T BOTHER DENYING IT.

DAMMIT, DOES *EVERYBODY* KNOW?!

MAYBE I SHOULDN'T EVEN BOTHER WEARING A MASK ANYMORE!

LEMME GUESS. THIS ISN'T *JUST* AN EARTHQUAKE.

NO. IT'S NOT.

DOCTOR STEPHEN STRANGE TOOK IT UPON HIMSELF TO REPAIR ALL THE DAMAGE DONE TO LAS VEGAS.

AS YOU KNOW, DOWNTOWN WAS ANNIHILATED. HE'S JUST REPAIRED IT.

BUT IN THE PROCESS, HE UNLEASHED... SOMETHING.

"IT'S CALLED THE HOTEL INFERNO...

"...AND IT'S BEING RUN BY MEPHISTO."

TO Fabulous LAS VEGAS NEVADA

ARE YOU *KIDDING* ME?! VEGAS IS BEING ATTACKED BY AN *EVIL* HOTEL?!

I'M AFRAID SO.

AND HOW DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS? ARE YOU ONE OF MEPHISTO'S HENCHMEN?

NO. MY ORGANIZATION HAS, AMONG OTHER THINGS, A SEER IN ITS EMPLOY. AN AUGUR. SHE TOLD US ABOUT THIS.

YOU NEED TO JOIN THE FIGHT AGAINST MEPHISTO.

JOIN THE--? KID, ARE YOU *NUTS?!* I STICK TO WALLS AND SHOOT WEBS. DEMON LORDS ARE ABOVE MY PAY GRADE!

DOCTOR STRANGE CAN FIX HIS OWN MESS! AND THE AVENGERS WILL LIKELY SHOW UP TO HELP.

THEY WILL...AND WILL PROVIDE NO HELP AT ALL.

THEY'LL BE TURNED INTO DEMONS.

THEN WHAT THE HELL AM I SUPPOSED TO DO?!

THERE IS ANOTHER GROUP OUR AGENTS HAVE INFORMED US OF. ONE THAT COULD ACTUALLY STAND A CHANCE AT STOPPING MEPHISTO. THE *MIDNIGHT SONS.*

MIDNIGHT SONS? SOUNDS LIKE A BAD BAND NAME.

BE SURE TO TELL THEM THAT WHEN YOU SEE THEM.

LOOK, KID, WHATEVER YOUR GROUP OR ORGANIZATION OR WHOEVER--

THE DIOGENES INITIATIVE.

THE...

DIOGENES? THE...THE BLACK MARVEL MENTIONED THAT...

THE BLACK MARVEL WENT FAR OUTSIDE THE PARAMETERS OF HIS ASSIGNMENT. YOUR DISPOSAL OF HIM WAS *WELL*-TIMED.

BUT LET'S CUT TO THE CHASE--

WE HAVE JUNE.

GET OUT THERE AND ACT LIKE A DAMNED HERO...

...OR VERY BAD THINGS WILL HAPPEN TO HER.

UNDERSTAND?

PERFECTLY.

I ASSUME YOU AREN'T *REALLY* A LITTLE GIRL.

NO. I'M NOT.

GOOD.

WHY "GOOD"?

WHAAM

THWUD

OW.

AWWW. THAT HURT?

YES.

GOOD.

LOOK OUTSIDE. SEE WHAT'S HAPPENED.

RIGHT.

HOLY JEEZ.

IS IT BAD?

WORSE THAN BAD. ALL HELL HAS BROKEN LOOSE.

"LITERALLY."

LOCK US DOWN. RIGHT NOW.

ON IT.

KLAAAANG

THE GUN STORE

SALE
SALE
SALE

MY GOD. THE CITY'S GONE COMPLETELY INSANE. PEOPLE ARE BEING TRANSFORMED INTO DEMONS.

HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE?

KRAAASH

GET OUTTA MY STORE, YOU--

JOEY?

JOEY FROM THE MICKEY D'S? WHA...WHAT HAPPENED TO--

NO! STAY BACK!

BLAAAM

BLAAM

BLAAM

HEEEEHE HEHHH!

NOOOO!

THWWIIIP

WHOOOAA, THERE, LITTLE DOGGIE.

LET'S MOSEY ON OUTTA HERE AND LEAVE THIS POOR GUY ALONE TO--

SHRRRIP!

CRAP. WELL, *THAT'S* NOT FAIR.

HEY! DUMBBELL! MY FEET ARE STICKY! YOU CAN'T DRAG ME OFF THE FLOOR NO MATTER WHAT YOU--

--DOOOO!

KRAAAASH

PERFECT. JUST PERFECT.

I WONDER IF PETER EVER HAS DAYS LIKE THIS.

KAINE DEFINITELY DOES...

OKAY, LET'S SEE IF I CAN PULL THIS OFF.

THWIP

GOT IT

NOW JUST NEED A LITTLE MUSCLE...

...OKAY, A LOT OF MUSCLE...

PERFECT!

WAAAAAH

NOW, NEXT STEP: GOTTA GET BACK TO THAT MILITARY SUPPLY STORE.

I'M HEADING INTO A WAR AND I'M GONNA HAVE TO SUIT UP FOR THAT.

THERE. THIS SHOULD HAVE YOU OUTFITTED FOR PRETTY MUCH ANYTHING.

EXTRA CARTRIDGES ARE IN THE POCKETS OF THE BELT.

YOU SURE YOU WON'T TAKE ANY MONEY FOR THIS?

I OWE YOU MY LIFE. FORGET IT.

WELL, THAT'S GOOD, BECAUSE I'M BROKE.

DO YOU HAVE A SECURE PLACE YOU CAN GO?

BASEMENT OF THIS STORE. I MADE IT OVER INTO A BOMB SHELTER. STOCKED IT WITH EVERYTHING I'D NEED WHEN *THE APOCALYPSE* ARRIVED.

YEEEAAAH. SWELL. HIDE DOWN THERE. I'LL COME BACK TO LET YOU KNOW WHEN EVERYTHING'S FIXED.

OR I MAY JUST LET YOU STAY THERE FOREVER.

YOU HEAR THAT?

WHY ARE PEOPLE SCREAMING OUTSIDE?!

WHY WOULDN'T THEY BE?

RUN FOR COVER. I'LL SEE WHAT'S HAPPENING.

THIS IS WHAT THIS CITY NEEDS!

MANHATTAN

GRAND

URBAN RENEWAL!

WHA--?

TALK ABOUT THE COMMUTE FROM HELL!

YARRRRRRRRHH!

GREAT. I'M DRIVING A CEMENT MIXER.

GOTTA FIND SOMEWHERE TO STASH IT AND TAKE THE KEYS SO THAT...

WHOA! SPIDER-SENSE IS GOING NUTS!

BUT IT'S NOT WARNING ME. IT...IT FEELS LIKE IT'S...

...GUIDING ME.

SO, THAT'S NEW. I GUESS WHEN ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE...

...IT BECOMES "ANYTHING'S POSSIBLE" DAY.

THEY'RE IMMUNE TO MY MAGIC! WE NEED TO FALL BACK!

AGREED. BUT WHERE ARE WE GONNA FALL BACK TO THAT'S SAFE FROM THEM?

ALL RIGHT, EVERYONE HURRY!

COME ON! THAT AIN'T GONNA KEEP THEM DOWN FOR VERY LONG!

BUT YOU'LL ALL BE SAFE WITH ME!

MAYBE

YOU SURE ABOUT THIS, WONG?

HEADING INTO THE HOTEL INFERNO IS PRETTY MUCH GIVING MEPHISTO HOME-FIELD ADVANTAGE, ISN'T IT?

LOOK AROUND YOU. THE ENTIRETY OF LAS VEGAS IS HIS HOME FIELD!

HE WOULDN'T EXPECT US TO GO CHARGING IN. WE'LL HAVE THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE.

YEAH, HERE'S THE THING-- THAT'S WHAT PEOPLE ALWAYS SAY BEFORE THEY CHARGE INTO A BATTLE THEY'LL LOSE...

...IN ORDER TO TRY AND CONVINCE THEMSELVES THAT THEY HAVE A HOPE IN HELL.

MOVE IT, CHEAPER CREEPER!

IT'S "SCARLET SPIDER," OKAY, ELSA? COULD WE PLEASE JUST DROP THE PATRONIZING NICKNAMES?

HELP US OUT OF THIS MESS AND I'LL THINK ABOUT IT!

SCARLET! I ACTUALLY HAVE A DIFFERENT JOB FOR YOU. I NEED YOU TO ***SECURE THE STRIP!***

WHY? YOU THINK YOU CAN'T COUNT ON ME IN THERE?

NO, I BELIEVE I ***CAN*** COUNT ON YOU OUT ***HERE.***

ONCE MEPHISTO KNOWS HE'S UNDER ATTACK, HE WILL TRY TO SUMMON HELP.

DEMONS ARE ALREADY WANDERING AROUND VEGAS, BUT WHEN HE CALLS FOR THEM, THEY'LL COME RUNNING.

AND YOU WANT ME TO KEEP THEM AWAY FROM THE HOTEL.

EXACTLY.

YEAH, OKAY. I CAN DO THAT.

BE CAREFUL! IT MAY BE HARD TO TELL THE DEMONS APART FROM REGULAR PEOPLE!

NOT FOR ME.

DON'T BE SO SURE!

EXCEPT I CAN BE SURE. IT'S A SNAP.

IF ANYONE SETS OFF MY SPIDER-SENSE, THAT MEANS THEY'RE EVIL DEMONS.

IF THEY DON'T, THEY'RE NOT.

THWIP!

THEEERE WE ARE.

A NICE BARRIER OF WEBBING.

I POURED IT ON THICK ENOUGH THAT IT SHOULD LAST FOR A COUPLE HOURS.

I'D LIKE TO SEE ANYONE TRY TO GET THROUGH THAT.

NOW, I JUST WAIT

AH. MY FIRST TEST.

THAT DIDN'T TAKE LONG.

SPIDER-MAN?!

ACTUALLY, IT'S SCARLET SPIDER.

LIKE SCARLETT O'HARA?

YEAH. JUST LIKE.

THE WHOLE TOWN HAS GONE INSANE. WHERE THE HELL DID THIS HOTEL COME FROM, ANYWAY?

ACTUALLY, YOU ASKED *AND* ANSWERED YOUR OWN QUESTION.

C'MON, PARTNER. LET'S GO IN AND FIND OUT WHAT'S WHAT.

YOU CAN'T GET PAST MY WEBS. TRUST ME.

WHAT WEBS?

THE ONES I SPUN AS A SAFETY MEASURE TO KEEP PEOPLE OUT.

STILL NOT SEEING 'EM.

C'MON! THEY'RE RIGHT--

HUH?!

MY WEB WALL JUST... VANISHED!

HUH?!

SPIDER-SENSE GOING NUTS!

HIGH STAKES

BLAAAM

DAMNATION!

BLAAAM BLAAAM

BLAAAM

BLAAAM

CRAP

CRAP CRAP CRAP

GLUBBB!

URKKKHH!

WAM

THUUD

WHY DIDN'T MY SPIDER-SENSE TRIGGER WHEN THEY *FIRST* SHOWED UP?!

THEY WERE DEMONS. I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN IT!

WOOOMF

THE LAST PERSON I CAN THINK OF THAT MY SPIDER-SENSE DIDN'T REACT TO WAS VENOM.

DO THESE PEOPLE HAVE *SYMBIOTES*, THEN?

NO. THAT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE.

SLAAAM

IT'S NOT LIKE EVERYONE IN THE WORLD IS A *VENOM*, NOW.

HEY!

WHAT DID YOU DO TO THOSE COPS?!

THEY AREN'T COPS! THEY'RE DEMONS!

ARE YOU KIDDING?

NO!

DEMONS ARE RUNNING AROUND IN VEGAS?

YES! SO GO HOME, LOCK THE DOORS, PULL THE DRAPES AND HIDE UNDER YOUR BEDS.

I HAVE A BETTER IDEA.

WE CUT YOU TO PIECES!

SO IT'S GONNA BE ONE OF THOSE DAYS, HUH?

MERCURY TOWERS

WHAM WHAM WHAM WHAM

WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON OUT THERE?!

YOU REALLY DON'T WANT TO KNOW.

THOSE DOORS COULD KEEP THE *HULK* OUT.

FOR NOW, WE'RE SAFE.

EVERYBODY, JUST GO HAVE A GOOD TIME! AS SOON AS THINGS CHANGE, YOU'LL BE THE FIRST TO KNOW.

IT'S BAD OUT THERE, ISN'T IT?

KID, YOU HAVE NO IDEA.

WHY DON'T YOU GO BACK TO YOUR PARENTS, KID. THERE'S NOTHING HERE FOR YOU TO--

HUH?

TOWERS

WHAT DO WE HAVE HERE?!

A DELICATE LITTLE MORSEL TO--

TOWERS

SSSSSSSSS

HUFF... HUFF...

SO... YEAH...

EVERYONE'S EVIL.

EXCEPT...NONE OF THEM TRIGGERED MY SPIDER-SENSE UNTIL THEY ACTUALLY ATTACKED.

IT'S USUALLY SIMPLE FOR ME TO TELL WHO THE BAD GUYS ARE.

THEY WEAR COSTUMES. THEY SHOUT MY NAME AND TALK ABOUT HOW THEY'RE GONNA DESTROY ME.

EASY PEASY.

BUT NOW THE DEMONS JUST LOOK LIKE ORDINARY PEOPLE.

WELL, FOR *VEGAS*, ANYWAY.

I'VE BEEN FIGHTING THE BAD GUYS FOR YEARS. HOW CAN I NOT BE ABLE TO TELL WHO THEY *ARE* BY NOW?

HEY! SPIDER GUY!

ARE YOU KIDDING ME?

THIS WHOLE TOWN HAS GONE NUTS!

I WAS OUT WITH MY WIFE AND DAUGHTER AND WE GOT SEPARATED.

HAVE YOU SEEN THEM?

SERIOUSLY? THAT'S YOUR STRATEGY?

UH, YEAH. SERIOUSLY. MY WIFE'S ABOUT THIS TALL AND--

THWIIP

HEY!

HEY! GIMME THOSE!

THOUGHT SO.

WAAAM

ARE YOU CRAZY?!

I... I THINK YOU KNOCKED A TOOTH OUT!

WHY THE HELL DID YOU DO THAT?!

STAY DOWN, DOOFUS. YOU'RE NOT GONNA FOOL ME AGAIN.

GOD, YOU SUPER HERO TYPES! YOU THINK YOU CAN DO ANYTHING!

BACK OFF. I MEAN IT.

OOOH, CLOSE. BUT NO CIGAR.

THAT'S TWO!

AND YOU DON'T GET A THIRD.

HUH?

WAM

OOOOFF!

WAM

STOP HITTING YOURSELF!

WAM

STOP HITTING YOURSELF!

WAM

STOP HITTING YOURSELF!

THAT'S BETTER.

JIMMY!

OH MY GOD! JIMMY!

SPIDER-MAN! WHY DID YOU BEAT UP MY DADDY?

HE'S NOT ANYBODY'S DADDY. HE'S A DEMON. AND THE NAME'S SCARLET SPI--

ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND?!

BUT...HE HAS RED EYES. JUST LIKE THE REST OF THEM--

HE HAS UVEITIS!

WHAT?

IT'S AN INFLAMMATION OF THE MIDDLE LAYER OF THE EYE!

HE'S UNDERGOING TREATMENT FOR IT, YOU LUNATIC!

I THOUGHT YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO HELP PEOPLE, SPIDER-MAN!

BUT YOU'RE JUST A BULLY!

I...IT'S SCARLET SPI--

THIS HAS GOT TO BE A GAG.

COME ON, HONEY. THE CAR'S JUST AROUND THE STREET. WE'RE LEAVING RIGHT NOW.

DO YOU... DO YOU NEED HELP GETTING TO YOUR CAR--?

NO!

NOT ALWAYS SO EASY TO TELL GOOD FROM BAD, IS IT...

...SCARLET SPIDER?

WALK

BLISM

MILES AWAY...

KNOCK! KNOCK!

SLAM

WIIIIRRRRRR

BRCKA

BRCKA

BULLETS?

OH, PLEASE. DON'T INSULT ME.

I'M NOT YOUR ENEMY.

BUT THEN, YOU WOULDN'T KNOW THAT, WOULD YOU?

YOU SEEM TO HAVE A GREAT DEAL OF TROUBLE DIFFERENTIATING FRIEND FROM FOE.

THIS ENTIRE STRUGGLE HAS BEEN A MICROCOSM OF YOUR LIFE, HASN'T IT?

LASHING OUT AT EVERYONE BECAUSE THEY MAY HURT YOU...

...BLIND TO THE CONSEQUENCE THAT YOU'VE LET YOURSELF BECOME THE *VILLAIN*.

I'M NOT A...

HUH?

YOU'RE NOT GONNA DISTRACT ME FROM MY JOB!

INDEED. I THINK WE SHOULD RELOCATE OUR DISCUSSION.

THERE. MUCH BETTER.

YOU MORTALS CALL THIS PLACE ***DEVILS TOWER***. IT'S NOT AS ***CUSHY*** AS THE HOTEL INFERNO, BUT IT'S NOT WITHOUT ITS CHARMS.

YOU MUST UNDERSTAND, SCARLET, THAT I CANNOT READ MINDS, BUT I CAN READ ***SOULS***.

AND YOURS IS A MOST BLACKENED, TORMENTED THING.

THE FACT OF THE MATTER IS THAT YOU REALLY ***CAN'T*** TELL GOOD FROM BAD. NOT IN OTHERS...

AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, NOT EVEN IN YOURSELF.

THAT'S WHY SO MANY SEE YOU AS A VILLAIN.

I'M NOT A VILLAIN.

OH? ASK SPIDER-MAN OR KAINE. ASK THAT LITTLE GIRL WHOSE INNOCENT FATHER YOU BEAT UP. THEY'D DISAGREE.

THE TRUTH IS, SCARLET...

...EVEN ***YOU*** DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU ARE.

AND IF YOU CAN'T ADMIT THAT TO ME, AT LEAST ADMIT IT TO YOURSELF.

BUT I CAN HELP.

I'VE BEEN KEEPING AN EYE ON YOU FOR QUITE SOME TIME, SCARLET. I KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT YOU.

YOUR AUNT JUNE HAS BEEN KIDNAPPED, HASN'T SHE?

I CAN GET HER BACK FOR YOU.

THE LITTLE GIRL, ABIGAIL, WHOM YOU ARE TRYING TO CURE OF A FATAL DISEASE?

I CAN *SAVE* HER.

BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY... YOUR SOUL?

I CAN *PURIFY* IT.

YOU'RE... YOU'RE LYING.

I'M LORD OF EVIL. YOU THINK I CAN'T ABSORB IT FROM A SOUL, CLEANSE IT? IT'S EASY.

JOIN ME, SCARLET SPIDER...AND YOU WILL HAVE A FRESH START. YOU WILL BE WHAT YOU TRULY WANT TO BE.

A HERO.

DEAL.

I MADE A DEAL WITH THE DEVIL...TO SAVE ABIGAIL'S LIFE, AND TO SAVE MY SOUL.

I MUST'VE BEEN CRAZY. WHAT GOOD WOULD A PURIFIED SOUL DO ME IF I'M THEN DAMNED WHEN I DIE?

JEEZ, WHAT IF THAT WAS SUCH AN EVIL DECISION TO MAKE THAT--

GOTTA CHECK MY FACE, SEE IF I'M TOTALLY EVIL.

WHEWWWWW...

MAYBE MY SOUL'S WAITING TO SEE WHAT I ACTUALLY DO. WHETHER I'M ON THE SIDE OF MEPHISTO...

...OR THE MIDNIGHT SONS.

I KEEP TELLING MYSELF I DID THE RIGHT THING.

AND IT'S NOT LIKE THE MIDNIGHT SONS *LIKE* ME, ESPECIALLY. THEY WENT TO TAKE ON THE EVIL AVENGERS AND LEFT ME AT MEPHISTO'S *EVIL HOTEL*...

MAKE SURE NO INNOCENT SOULS COME WANDERING IN.

THEY WANTED ME TO STAND GUARD...

HOTEL INFERNO

STAND FREAKING GUARD!

KRAAAK

OW.

OW OW OW.

AAAAND THE WALL FIXED ITSELF.

FREAKING FIGURES.

EVEN THE WEB BLOCKADE I CREATED FELL APART.

THAT'S ABOUT PAR FOR THE COURSE

THE DEAL SEEMED TO MAKE SO MUCH SENSE AT THE TIME. IT WOULD SOLVE BOTH MY MAJOR PROBLEMS.

THE WAY I'VE ACTED, MY SOUL PROBABLY ENDS UP DAMNED ANYWAY. SO THAT'S NO LOSS...

AND ABIGAIL'S CURED. PLUS WITH MY SOUL PURIFIED, I GET TO BE A HERO AGAIN.

EXCEPT...WHAT KIND OF IDIOT MAKES A DEAL WITH THE DEVIL?

IF HE OFFERED A DEAL TO ANY OF THE MIDNIGHT SONS, THEY'D TELL HIM TO STICK IT WHERE THE SUN DON'T SHINE.

HOW CAN I CALL MYSELF A HERO IF I ACT TOTALLY DIFFERENTLY FROM THE WAY HEROES ACT?

PETER AND KAINE BOTH SAID I WAS A VILLAIN. I KEPT SAYING NO. BUT WHAT HERO WOULD DO WHAT I DID?

ONE WHO WANTED TO SAVE AN INNOCENT GIRL, I GUESS.

IT SEEMED SO SIMPLE TO MAKE THE DEAL WITH HIM.

HE CURES ABBY, CURES MY SOUL... AND ALL I HAVE TO DO IS HELP HIM IN A FIGHT HE'LL LIKELY WIN ANYWAY.

OF COURSE, HE'S FREAKING *MEPHISTO*. HE MIGHT COME UP WITH SOME MEANS OF GOING BACK ON THE DEAL.

AND WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO THEN? LODGE A COMPLAINT WITH THE BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU?

SO BASICALLY I'M TRUSTING THE PRINCE OF LIES TO STICK TO THE AGREEMENT.

WHICH IS WHAT HE GENERALLY DOES IN VARIOUS STORIES. SO ISN'T IT LIKELY HE'D STICK TO THIS ONE?

SPLUUUUCH

WHOA!

BETTER MAKE MYSELF SCARCE!

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, MAN-THING?

NNNNNNN--

I'LL TAKE THAT AS A YES.

INTO BATTLE, THEN!

WITH ALL THIS INSANITY GOING ON...

...IT SHOULDN'T BE HARD TO MAKE THINGS EVEN MORE CONFUSING.

I MEAN, I *HAVE* TO DO IT, FOR ABBY'S SAKE. SHE DOESN'T DESERVE TO DIE. I SWORE I'D SAVE HER.

PLUS IF SHE DIES, EITHER KAINE OR CASSANDRA WOULD WIND UP KILLING ME.

SO IT COMES DOWN TO EITHER ABBY AND ME... OR THE MIDNIGHT SONS.

OBVIOUSLY, I CHOOSE ABBY

WONG IS SO BUSY DEFENDING HIMSELF FROM CAPTAIN MARVEL...

...THAT A STRAIGHT-UP BULLET TO THE BRAIN SHOULD TAKE HIM OUT EASILY.

YES, I'M BETRAYING HIM. BUT I'LL BE A HERO TO ABIGAIL AND HER MOM.

WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT DYING WITH A DAMNED SOUL WHEN I CAN LIVE WITH A CLEANSED ONE?

THIS IS BAD. THIS IS *REALLY* BAD.

HE'S GOING TO KILL WONG.

I MEAN, THEY MAY BE SUPER AND ALL, BUT THEY'RE NOT BULLET-PROOF.

HE WON'T KILL HIM. I HAVE FAITH IN THE SCARLET SPIDER.

YOU? FAITH? REALLY?

REALLY. SO MUCH SO, IN FACT, THAT I'VE ALREADY RETURNED HIS AUNT JUNE TO MERCURY RISING.

WHY THE HELL DID YOU DO *THAT*?!

HONESTLY?

BECAUSE SHE WAS GETTING ON MY NERVES.

THE DEMONS OUT THERE WILL TEAR HER APART!

NOT LIKELY. I CANNOT PROTECT THE ENTIRE CITY FROM MEPHISTO'S MINIONS, BUT JUNE?

"THAT'S NO PROBLEM AT ALL."

HOW THE HELL DID I GET HERE?

LAST THING I REMEMBER WAS BEING IN MY ROOM. NOW I'M OUTSIDE?

MAYBE I'M GOING SENILE.

NYAAAARHH!

WHAT ARE--

FWAZAAAAK

YEAH. *DEFINITELY* SENILE.

DELUSIONS ARE THE FIRST INDICATOR.

FACE IT, BEN. YOU'RE BEING SELFISH.

PUTTING YOUR OWN CONCERNS... YOUR SOUL, ABBY'S LIFE...OVER THE LIVES OF YOUR ALLIES IN A BATTLE AGAINST EVIL.

THAT'S WHAT MEPHISTO WANTED. YOU'RE HIS TOOL.

SCREW IT. AND SCREW MEPHISTO.

HUH?!

WH-WHERE DID--?

WHAM

OOOOOOH CRAP

TRAITOR! YOU DIDN'T SHOOT! YOU DIDN'T DO *ANYTHING!*

MEPHISTO *KNOWS*, BETRAYER! YOU BROKE THE DEAL!

OH, GREAT. HE'S INVISIBLE.

AND MY SPIDER-SENSE WON'T REACT TO HIM BECAUSE HE'S LIKE ANOTHER ME...

...BUT MAYBE I CAN BLUFF THE DEMON.

I'VE STILL GOT MY SPIDER-SENSE, KAINE.

YOU CAN'T HIT ME, EVEN WHEN I CAN'T SEE YOU.

MISSED, DAMMIT.

WHAT'S THE MATTER, KAINE? TOO SCARED TO COME OUT AND FACE ME?

FWOOOSH

CRIPES. TOO CLOSE. WAAAY TOO CLOSE.

YEAH. THIS IS GETTING ME NOWHERE.

TIME TO GET AGGRESSIVE.

OBVIOUSLY MEPHISTO DID TO KAINE THE SAME THING HE DID TO THE AVENGERS

WHICH MEANS HE'S MEPHISTO'S NOW, BUT NOT IN THE "LET'S MAKE A DEAL" SENSE THAT I AM.

KRAAAAASH

OHHHH. HERE WE GO AGAIN.

THIS IS *NOT* HOW I EXPECTED TO BE SPENDING MY WEEKEND.

I'M GONNA HAVE TO FIND A WAY TO SHUT HIM DOWN AND I BETTER MAKE IT FAST.

BEEN KEEPING A VIAL OF HOLY WATER EVER SINCE A DEMON TOOK THE FORM OF *THE BLACK MARVEL*. DIDN'T THINK I'D EVER HAVE TO USE IT ON *KAINE*.

FIRST THINGS FIRST.

GOTTA LURE HIM *OUT* OF THIS HELLHOLE.

COME ON, KAINE. DO WHAT I NEED YOU TO DO.

FWOOOOSH

SSSSSS...

GOTCHA!

DRINK UP, KAINE.

THIS'LL EITHER CURE YOU OR KILL YOU.

EITHER ONE IS FINE BY ME.

≠KCCCCCHHHH≠

≠KCCHHH≠
≠KCCCCCHHHH≠

COME ON
COME ON...

GDADADADRRRRR!

WHOAAA!

WHAT...

...THE *HELL*...

...JUST *HAPPENED?*

THERE'S A FOUNTAIN NOT TOO FAR FROM HERE THAT'S BLESSED WITH HOLY WATER. REMEMBER?

RIGHT. RIGHT, YES.

CONSIDERING WHAT WAS GOING ON, I DECIDED TO PICK UP A SAMPLE FROM IT JUST IN CASE.

SURE GLAD I DID THAT.

HOW DID YOU GET POSSESSED, ANYWAY?

A GIANT UNEARTHLY CASINO APPEARED OUT OF NOWHERE. NATURALLY I CAME TO INVESTIGATE IT, SAME AS YOU.

WELL, THAT WAS A STUPID THING TO DO.

WHY? *YOU* DID IT.

YEAH, I DID, BUT NOT EXACTLY WILLINGLY.

WHAT'S *THAT* SUPPOSED TO MEAN?

NOTHING.

BEN...

THE DEMON WHO POSSESSED ME MADE ME STOP YOU BECAUSE HE THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO SHOOT ONE OF MEPHISTO'S HELPERS.

I REMEMBER HIS THOUGHTS. HE WAS THINKING, "TRAITOR."

WHY WOULD HE HAVE THOUGHT THAT?

BEN?

BEN, DAMMIT, *SAY* SOMETHING!

BEN, WHAT DID YOU DO?!

WAAAAM

I MADE A DEAL, OKAY?!

I MADE A DEAL. TO SERVE MEPHISTO. AND HELP STOP THE MIDNIGHT SONS.

ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND?!

DON'T YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT I'M GETTING OUT OF IT?

NO!

IT'S CALLED A *DEAL WITH THE DEVIL* FOR A REASON!

HE'LL SCREW YOU OUT OF WHATEVER HE PROMISED! THAT'S WHAT EVIL DEALMAKERS ALWAYS DO!

HE SAID HE'D CURE ABIGAIL!

AT WHAT *COST?* HER SOUL, TOO?

EVEN IF HE CURES HER, HE'LL LIKELY ARRANGE AN ACCIDENT AFTER THAT SO SHE DIES ANYWAY!

YOU THINK I DIDN'T *THINK* OF THAT?!

IT DOESN'T MATTER ANYWAY! I DIDN'T SHOOT WONG. I WENT BACK ON THE AGREEMENT.

SO THAT MEANS IT'S OVER. HE'S NOT GOING TO REWARD ME FOR DOING NOTHING.

YOU TOLD ME DEATH SAID YOUR SOUL WAS IN BAD SHAPE.

THAT'S PROBABLY WHAT LED YOU TO AGREE TO THE DEAL. YOU'RE NOT THINKING CLEARLY.

YEAH, I FIGURED THAT OUT.

WELL, GOOD FOR YOU.

THERE'S TONS OF POSSESSED HUMAN BEINGS RUNNING AROUND.

YOU THINK THROWING THEM INTO THE POOL OF HOLY WATER WOULD CURE THEM?

MOST LIKELY.

I THINK I'LL GO FIND OUT.

YOU COMING?

NO. I NEED TO SHOW MEPHISTO WHAT I'VE *DEFINITIVELY* DECIDED ABOUT OUR DEAL.

GOOD.

THE MIDNIGHT SONS. THEY NEED MY HELP...

BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE

FALL BACK! EVERYONE FALL BACK!

MANEUVER AND GAIN AN ADVANTAGE!

OOOOFFF!

RRRRAAARR!

DON'T YOU HAVE ANYTHING BETTER TO DO?

GO TO THE MOVIES OR SOMETHING.

YOU OKAY?

I'LL SURVIVE.

GOOD.

LET'S END THIS.

TO BE CONCLUDED IN DAMNATION

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA.
MERCURY RISING HOTEL AND CASINO.

FINALLY! A RESPONSE FROM SHELDON SANDERS!

THE GUY WHO'S BEEN RESEARCHING A CURE FOR CROOKS' DISEASE

MERCURY

RISING

COME ON, SANDERS. GIVE ME GOOD NEWS. ABIGAIL MERCURY ISN'T GETTING ANY *HEALTHIER*.

"THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN...

WHAT THE HELL?

"CURRENTLY INVOLVED IN *GOVERNMENT RESEARCH*. UNABLE TO...

WE'RE TALKING ABOUT A LITTLE GIRL'S LIFE!

HMM... HE'S AT NAVAL AIR STATION FALLON A FEW HOURS AWAY AT LEAST. THAT'S WHERE THIS EMAIL IS FROM.

OKAY, DOC... YOU'RE GOING TO BE GETTING A PERSONAL VISIT FROM...

ARRRHHH...!

SPIDER-SENSE... GOING NUTS!

WHAT THE HELL... IS CAUSING *THIS?*

COMING FROM... CASSANDRA'S OFFICE.

IF I SHOW UP IN MY SCARLET SPIDER COSTUME...THAT'LL BE THE FINAL NAIL IN THE COFFIN OF MY *SECRET IDENTITY...*

GOT TO...PULL MYSELF TOGETHER. SPIDER-SENSE IS RINGING LIKE A JACKHAMMER IN MY SKULL...SO WHATEVER THIS THING IS...IT MUST BE A *MASSIVE* THREAT.

HAVE TO... STAY CALM.

THAT'S IT. BEN. KEEP YOUR HEAD STRAIGHT.

ACT LIKE NOTHING'S GOING WRONG

WHATEVER IS HAPPENING IN CASS' OFFICE, I'LL BE ABLE TO HANDLE IT. HELL, CASS IS A GREAT JUDGE OF PEOPLE.

SHE'S PROBABLY ALL OVER IT.

IT'S GOING TO BE A PLEASURE TO WORK WITH YOU.

OH, PETER! COME IN. HERE'S SOMEONE YOU'LL WANT TO MEET.

PETER, THIS IS ***MISTY BECK***. SHE'S A MAGICIAN.

I ACTUALLY PREFER JUST "MISTY." YOU KNOW, LIKE BEYONCE.

MISTY IS GOING TO BE PERFORMING A HUGE MAGIC TRICK FOR CHARITY. SHE'S GOING TO--

PETER, ARE YOU OKAY? YOU'RE AS PALE AS A GHOST.

OH, NO, I'M...I'M FINE. JUST KIND OF HOT OUT TODAY.

WELL, IT'S VEGAS, SO THAT'S PRETTY TYPICAL.

MISTY... BECK?

I SEEM TO REMEMBER READING ARTICLES ABOUT SOMEONE ELSE NAMED BECK. WHAT WAS THE FIRST NAME?

OH, RIGHT...

QUENTIN.

QUENTIN BECK. THINK THE PAPERS USED TO CALL HIM MYSTERIO-- MASTER OF ILLUSION?

ANY RELATION?

YOU HAVE QUITE A MEMORY, PETER.

AS IT SO HAPPENS, HE'S MY FATHER. BUT HE'S...

RETIRED. AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT HE'S TOLD ME.

AND ME TOO. WHEN I *KICKED IN HIS DOOR* A FEW WEEKS AGO.*

YOU HAVE QUITE A STRONG GRIP, PETER.

*BACK IN *SCARLET SPIDER #14*, CLONEHEADS! --DEVIN

RIGHT. SORRY.

HOPE I DIDN'T HURT YOU.

I'LL SURVIVE.

WELL, I'LL BE ON MY WAY. SEE YOU SATURDAY, CASSANDRA.

LOOKING FORWARD TO IT.

SATURDAY? WHAT ARE WE SEEING HER ABOUT ON SATURDAY?

I WAS TRYING TO TELL YOU WHEN YOU HAD YOUR LITTLE *HOT FLASH.*

THAT'S WHEN MISTY IS PERFORMING *HER MAGIC* ACT AT THE CASINO.

MYSTERIO'S DAUGHTER IS A *MAGICIAN?* OF *COURSE* SHE IS.

WHICH WOULD BE...?

SHE'S GOING TO MAKE THIS ENTIRE RESORT *DISAPPEAR!*

WE'RE CELEBRATING THE ANNIVERSARY OF WHEN DAVID COPPERFIELD MADE THE STATUE OF LIBERTY VANISH, SHE FIGURED THIS WOULD BE A GREAT FOLLOW-UP.

DID SHE TELL YOU HOW SHE'S GOING TO MAKE A 50-STORY BUILDING VANISH?

OF COURSE NOT! A MAGICIAN NEVER TELLS.

DO YOU HAVE A PROBLEM WITH THIS, PETER?

WELL, HER FATHER IS MYSTERIO, SO YEAH. THAT UPS THE CHANCES THAT SHE'S A SUPER VILLAIN.

EXCEPT I COULD BE WRONG. I'VE NEVER HEARD OF HER. MAYBE SHE'S PLAYING IT STRAIGHT.

NO, IT'S... FINE.

IT'S ALL FINE.

DID YOU NEED TO SEE ME ABOUT SOMETHING?

NOPE. IT'S ALL GOOD.

LET'S SEE WHAT A SEARCH ENGINE COMES UP WITH FOR MISTY BECK.

HMM. NO CRIMINAL RECORD. NOT SO MUCH AS A PARKING TICKET.

WHICH EITHER MEANS SHE'S REALLY GOOD AT HIDING HER CRIMES...

...OR SHE'S REALLY STRAIGHT.

HUNH. SHE'S GOT A WEBSITE.

NO MENTION OF HER CONNECTION TO MYSTERIO, BUT THAT MAKES SENSE.

MISTY BECK

MAGICIAN SHOWS NEWS

LATEST VIDEOS

SHIROW MASAMUNE

DAMN.

I WISH DUSK WERE STILL HERE.

HI.

JEEEZ!

WHERE THE HELL DID YOU COME FROM?!

I WAS STICKING TO MISTY'S *SHADOW* AGAIN AND THEN *YOU* WALKED IN. I RECOGNIZED YOU.

HOW?!

YOU CAN HIDE YOUR FACE, BUT YOUR SHADOW IS DISTINCTIVE.

SERIOUSLY?

I'M ALWAYS SERIOUS.

SO WHAT'S MISTY UP TO?

I DON'T KNOW.

IS SHE *PLANNING* SOMETHING?

I HAVE NO MORE INFORMATION THAN YOU DID WHEN I ASKED YOU FIVE SECONDS AGO.

HOW ABOUT SUSPICIONS?

THOSE I HAVE PLENTY OF.

DO WE STOP HER?

TECHNICALLY WE HAVE NO REASON TO. JUST *SUSPICIONS.*

NO, MISTY'S ACT NEEDS TO GO ON *AS PLANNED.* I WON'T RISK ATTACKING ANOTHER INNOCENT PERSON...

...BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN I TRUST HER.

AND WE MAY NEED ADDITIONAL BACKUP.

MEANWHILE, THE HOME OF QUENTIN BECK.

WHY DO I HAVE TO BE THERE, MISTY?

BECAUSE IT'S GOING TO BE A CHANGING POINT IN MY LIFE, DAD!

ONCE I HAVE THE HAND OF HAAGENTI...

IT *DOESN'T EXIST*, I'M TELLING YOU.

DAD, I'VE BEEN STUDYING MAGIKS SINCE BEFORE I HIT *PUBERTY*. IT'S THERE.

MISTY, PLEASE, I'M *BEGGING* YOU. GIVE UP ALL THIS MAGIC STUFF. IT WON'T END WELL.

TELL YOU WHAT. I'LL MAKE A DEAL WITH YOU.

YOU BE THERE SATURDAY, AND IF I CAN'T FIND THE HAND, I SWEAR...

I'LL STOP DOING MAGIKS *FOREVER*.

YOU MEAN THAT?

I ABSOLUTELY DO.

OH, THANK GOD.

HUFFF
HUFFF
WHAT TH--?!
AHHHH!
THWIP
SNAP
UNFFFFF!
HELLO, BUSTER. HOW'S IT GOING?
LEMME GO!
I WILL. EVENTUALLY.
FIRST WE'RE GOING TO CHAT.

MISTER MARLOWE, BUDDY. I'M TOLD YOU KNOW HIM AND WHERE TO FIND HIM.

NEVER HEARD OF HIM.

GO AHEAD. SHOOT IT. IT'LL BACKFIRE INTO YOUR HAND.

MISTER MARLOWE. TELL ME OR I'LL KILL YOU.

I *HEARD* OF YOU! YOU'RE THE *SCARLET SPIDER*. YOU PUT A BUDDY OF MINE IN JAIL WHEN YOU WERE IN ARIZONA, BUT YOU'D *NEVER* KILL ANYONE.

FUNNY...

THAT'S WHAT FAST EDDIE SAID RIGHT BEFORE I KILLED *HIM*.

YOU SHOT HIM? I... I HEARD HE WAS DEAD, BUT...

YUP. YOU WANT TO GO, TOO?

HE'S REAL PRIVATE. REAL, REAL PRIVATE. MARLOWE ISN'T EVEN HIS REAL NAME.

BUT EVERY SUNDAY MORNING HE GOES TO THE BREAKFAST CLUB AT THE SIERRA. NEVER MISSES IT.

THAT'S WHERE YOU CAN FIND HIM.

THIS ISN'T A TRICK, IS IT, BUDDY?
NO! NO!
NOT GOING TO WARN HIM AND HAVE ME WALK INTO A TRAP, RIGHT?
I SWEAR I WON'T!
YOU'RE SWEARING ON YOUR LIFE, YOU KNOW.
I KNOW!
GOOD.
ARE YOU GONNA LET ME GO?!
IT'LL WEAR OFF... EVENTUALLY.
SO YOU KILLED A GUY? HUNH.
GUESS I UNDERESTIMATED YOU.

I DIDN'T KILL HIM, BEN. RIGHT AFTER I LEFT HIM, A CRIMINAL FRIEND PUT A BULLET IN HIS HEAD FOR TALKING TO ME.

I SHOULD'VE KNOWN.

YES, YOU SHOULD HAVE. YOU SHOULD KNOW I WOULDN'T--

KILL ANYBODY? YOU WERE READY TO KILL ME.

AND I STILL HAVEN'T. DON'T TEMPT ME.

WHY ARE YOU LOOKING FOR THIS MARLOWE GUY?

HE HIRED THE HIPPO TO INCAPACITATE QUARTERBACKS IN ORDER TO WIN A FOOTBALL GAME.

THE *HIPPO*, HUH? WAS HE *HUNGRY HUNGRY*?

WHY ARE YOU HERE, BEN? I ASSUME IT'S NOT A SOCIAL CALL.

I NEED YOUR HELP. MYSTERIO'S DAUGHTER IS IN TOWN.

HE HAS A DAUGHTER? SINCE WHEN?

I ASSUME SINCE SHE WAS BORN.

DOES SHE TAKE AFTER HER FATHER?

THERE'S NO EVIDENCE THAT SHE DOES, BUT...

YOU'RE WORRIED. WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

YOU DOING ANYTHING THIS SATURDAY?

APPARENTLY I AM.

SATURDAY.

AND NOW, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, WITHOUT FURTHER ADO, WE PRESENT...

ALL RIGHT. THE STAGE IS SET. MY PLAYERS ARE WAITING IN THE WINGS.

SHOWTIME.

...THE GREAT MYSTERIA!

THANK YOU, THANK YOU!

CLAP CLAP

CLAP

CLAP CLAP

CLAP

CLAP

PLEASE, WE'RE ALL FRIENDS HERE! CALL ME MISTY!

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I'M SURE YOU ALL REMEMBER WHEN DAVID COPPERFIELD MADE THE STATUE OF LIBERTY DISAPPEAR.

AS YOU RECALL, HE DID IT LATE AT NIGHT, WITH THE AID OF GIGANTIC PROPS AND TRICKERY.

THAT WILL NOT BE HAPPENING HERE.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND. WHY AREN'T WE INSIDE THE *ACTUAL CASINO?*

BECAUSE SHE'S OUT HERE. SO WE'RE STAYING NEAR HER.

BUT THE PEOPLE INSIDE ARE UNPROTECTED.

DON'T WORRY...

"...I GOT A MAN ON THE INSIDE."

OTOMO INDUSTRIES

I'M NOT SURE ABOUT THIS, DIVA. WHY ARE WE ALL STILL IN HERE IF SHE'S PLANNING TO MAKE THE PLACE VANISH?

SLATE, IT'S A TRICK. WE WON'T *REALLY* DISAPPEAR.

HOW DO WE KNOW THAT?

SERIOUSLY, SLATE? YOU DON'T THINK THIS IS JUST TRICKERY?

MAGIC IS REAL, DIVA. ASK DOC STRANGE IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME.

SHE'S NOT DOCTOR STRANGE, SLATE. SHE'S JUST A STAGE MAGICIAN.

SOMETIMES YOU NEED TO RELAX. THIS IS A CASINO, A PLACE TO HAVE FUN.

AVENGERS

YOU SHOULDN'T *ALWAYS* BE WORRIED ABOUT AN ATTACK.

AND NOW, FOR YOUR ENTERTAINMENT, I PRESENT...

...THE WORLD'S LARGEST CURTAIN!

UNLEASH IT, BOYS!

HERE IT COMES!

FWWW

NOW YOU MIGHT THINK THE SPELL REQUIRED FOR IT TO VANISH IS COMPLICATED, WITH LOTS OF WORDS IN LATIN OR ARAMAIC.

BUT NO. THIS IS SIMPLY A CASE OF MIND OVER MATTER.

VANISH.

RRRRRR RUUU

AND NOW FOR MY NEXT TRICK...

KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE GLOWING BALL.

LOOK AWAY! CLOSE YOUR EYES!

SLEEP.

COME ON, DAD! LET'S GO!

IMPRESSIVE TRICK.

WHERE DID THE BUILDING GO?

HAVEN'T THE FAINTEST IDEA.

WILL IT COME BACK?

EVENTUALLY. MINIMUM DISAPPEARANCE TIME IS AN HOUR. WE'LL BE LONG GONE BY THEN.

AND WAIT'LL YOU SEE WHAT...

CRAP. ARE YOU KIDDING ME?

WE'RE MADE, DUSK. LET'S MOVE IT!

MER

HOLY--!

RISING!

NOT A WORD, SLATE.

NOT A SINGLE "I TOLD YOU SO" IS TO ESCAPE YOUR LIPS.

THERE'S SOMETHING COMING.

A *LOT* OF SOMETHINGS.

WHAT ARE YO--

WHAT THE HELL ARE THOSE?

I CAN TELL YOU EXACTLY WHAT THEY ARE.

THEY'RE CALLED THE MINDLESS ONES.

AND WE ARE VERY LIKELY GOING TO DIE.

I DON'T WANT TO FIGHT THEM, MISTY. I CAN'T. WHATEVER THIS IS...

QUIET, DAD, FOR GOD'S SAKE! WE'RE WHERE WE NEED TO BE! JUST--

DID IT!

SPIDER, WAIT!

NO WAY! I'M NOT GIVING THEM A CHANCE TO--

--VANISH?!

SON OF A--

WHERE'D THEY GO?! DID THEY TURN INVISIBLE?

NO. MY GUESS IS THEY TELEPORTED DOWN *THERE.*

DOWN WHERE--?

OH.

THOSE... THOSE LOOK LIKE HORNS.

THAT'S BECAUSE THEY *ARE* HORNS.

LIKE, THE DEVIL'S HORNS? ARE WE DEALING WITH MEPHISTO AGAIN?

NO. JUDGING BY THE MARK, IT'S A BEING CALLED CYTTORAK.

HE'S EITHER A GOD OR A DEMON, DEPENDING ON WHICH SIDE YOUR PROCLIVITIES LIE.

DOCTOR STRANGE IS ALWAYS TALKING ABOUT THE "CRIMSON BANDS" OF CYTTORAK.

HUNH. I ALWAYS THOUGHT THAT WAS A MUSICAL GROUP.

GO LIMP.

WHAT? WHAT'RE YOU--

MEANWHILE, IN AN UNKNOWN DIMENSION...

OKAY! YOU GUYS WANNA GO?

LET'S GO!

WHAM

BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA

WHAT THE--

SLATE?! WHAT'RE YOU DOING OUTSIDE THE CASINO?!

WHAT, YOU THOUGHT YOU WERE THE ONLY ONE WHO WAS GOING TO HAVE FUN?

MEANWHILE...

SO WHEN THE MERCURY RISING TOWER WAS CONSTRUCTED--

THEY HAD NO IDEA THAT THEY WERE BUILDING ON TOP OF AN ANCIENT SITE OF WORSHIP.

THAT'S WHY I HAD TO GET RID OF IT. THE TRANSFERENCE SPELL ONLY WORKS IF YOU'RE STANDING IN THE OBJECT'S *IMMEDIATE VICINITY.*

WE'D BETTER HURRY. SPIDER-MAN CAN'T BE FAR BEHIND...

THAT'S NOT SPIDER-MAN. THAT'S THE SCARLET SPIDER.

HOW DO *YOU* KNOW?

I *PAY ATTENTION.*

UP HERE. JUST AROUND THE CORNER.

WHOA. IS THIS AN ARMORY?

SOMEWHAT. ALSO SACRIFICES WERE CONDUCTED HERE.

THAT'S A LOT OF SWORDS.

WELL, THEY HAD A LOT OF VICTIMS.

LOOK-- THE DUST! A DAGGER WAS MOVED FROM HERE RECENTLY!

NOT CARING. LET'S KEEP MOVING, DAD.

THERE! WE MADE IT!

LOOK, DAD!

WHAT AM I LOOKING AT?

THERE. RIGHT THERE. IT'S THE CRIMSON BRAND OF CYTTORAK.

THAT'S WHAT THEY CALL IT?

ACTUALLY, NO. IT'S SOME LONG NAME IN LATIN. THAT'S JUST THE NICKNAME I CAME UP WITH.

IT'S A DIRECT TAP INTO CYTTORAK'S POWER. ANYONE WHO WIELDS IT BECOMES ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL BEINGS ON EARTH.

HOW DO YOU ACTIVATE IT?

I HAVE TO TRANSFER IT TO MY SKIN. TO MY HAND, SPECIFICALLY.

EVER HEARD OF HAVING YOUR PALM READ? IT'S ACTUALLY R-E-D. THAT'S THE ORIGIN OF THE PHRASE.

BUT IT'S PAINTED ON HERE. HOW ARE YOU GOING TO MOVE IT?

THERE'S A CEREMONY INVOLVED.

ACTUALLY, IT INVOLVES *YOU.*

ME? HOW?

THE ONE WHO WANTS THE POWER HAS TO SPILL THE BLOOD OF THE PERSON THEY LOVE THE MOST.

AND IT HAS TO BE A LOT OF BLOOD.

SORRY, DAD.

ARE YOU *INSANE?!*

NO. JUST DETERMINED!

HOW CAN YOU DO THIS?! I'M YOUR FATHER!

AND I LOVE YOU! I ALWAYS HAVE!

BUT THIS IS WHAT I HAVE TO DO TO GAIN THE POWER I NEED!

I'LL NEVER FORGET YOU!

HOLD IT!

OH, OF ALL THE--

UNHHH...

D...

DAD...?

NO! NO!

MISTY!

WHOA.

WELL, THAT SOLVED *THAT*, I GUESS.

MISTY! MISTY, I'M SO SORRY! I--

BUT YOU WERE GOING TO KILL ME! HOW COULD YOU--?

AdAArrHHH!

BECK! WHAT'S HAPPENING? WHAT'S GOING ON?!

BECK!

YOU CAUSED THIS! YOU DID THIS TO HER!

ME? I WAS OVER HERE!

UH... WHAT'S THAT THING ON YOUR PALM?

WE NEED TO GO. RIGHT NOW.

WHY? BECAUSE HE'S GOT A *NEW* TATTOO?

HOLY CRAP!

YOU'RE GOING TO PAY FOR MISTY'S DEATH, WEB-SPINNER.

FIRST YOU! AND THEN SPIDER-MAN! AND THEN EVERY OTHER CREATURE THAT WALKS OR CRAWLS!

FLOOOOSH

GO! GO!

UNHHH...

OUT OF MY WAY, CHILD!

YOU ARE BUT A SIDESHOW. I'M INTERESTED IN THE MAIN EVENT!

GOTTA FIND SOMETHING TO STOP HIM.

SOME SORT OF...I DUNNO... MIRACLE WEAPON.

OOOOFFF!

OKAY, THAT'S NEW.

OHHHH NUTS.

THIS IS JUST GETTING BETTER AND BETTER

I REALLY DON'T NEED THOSE THINGS GETTING THEIR HANDS ON ME.

OF COURSE. THIS IS SENDING ME RIGHT BACK IN MYSTERIO'S DIRECTION.

NOT SURE HOW IT'S HELPING MATTERS.

OH. THAT'S GREAT. PERFECT. *PERFECT.*

I HOPE DUSK IS OKAY. I CAN'T POSSIBLY TAKE HIM DOWN WITHOUT HER.

WELL, SURE. OF COURSE. WHAT ELSE TO EXPECT?

THAT MIGHT BE MY ONLY CHANCE.

YOU TRULY THINK YOU CAN RUN, SCARLET SPIDER?

THE DAYS OF MY BEING A POWERLESS FREAK ARE OVER!

I HAVE THE POWER TO CONQUER YOU, AND THE AVENGERS, AND DEADPOOL! I HAVE THE POWER TO--

TO BRING YOUR DAUGHTER BACK TO LIFE? *HMM?*

DIDN'T THINK SO.

AT THE END OF THE DAY, IT LOOKS LIKE YOU WERE JUST AS LOUSY A FATHER AS YOU WERE A VILLAIN.

HOW MANY CHILDREN ARE READY TO KILL THEIR PARENTS JUST TO HAVE POWER?

GUESS SHE INHERITED YOUR ***SELFISHNESS*** TOO, HUH?

I SHOULD HAVE HUNTED YOU DOWN AS SOON AS YOU KICKED IN MY DOOR.

BUT THIS WILL BE MORE SATISFYING!

IT'S HOLDING UP TO HIS SWORD! I HOPED IT WOULD!

WHAT'S THE MATTER, BECK? THOUGHT YOU COULD SLICE RIGHT THROUGH THIS?

APPARENTLY CYTTORAK'S FOLLOWERS CREATED SOME WEAPONS TO HANDLE SOMEONE LIKE YOU WHO GOT OUT OF CONTROL!

I'M NOT OUT OF CONTROL! I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT I'M DOING!

I'M GOING TO *KILL* YOU!

BUT YOU WON'T KILL ME, WILL YOU?

YOU AND YOUR ILK, ALWAYS SHOWING HOW SUPERIOR YOU ARE BY STOPPING SHORT OF DEALING A FATAL BLOW.

YEAH. YOU'RE RIGHT.

I WON'T KILL YOU.

I'LL JUST DISARM YOU.

WELL, DIS-HAND, BUT YOU GET THE IDEA.

AHRRR

UNNHHHH--

UH--

POOOOOFF

POOOOFF

--OH!

OKAY, THEN.

KILL YOU... I'LL KILL YOU...

MAYBE. BUT NOT TODAY.

WELL DONE.

THANKS. NOW GET US THE HELL OUT OF HERE.

GOOD JOB.

THE HORNS VANISHED FROM HIS HAND. GET HIM AND THE HAND TO THE NEAREST HOSPITAL. HOPEFULLY THEY CAN REATTACH IT.

KILL... YOU...

GO RIGHT ON BELIEVING THAT.

WHOA! SPIDER-SENSE GOING NUTS!

BUT THERE'S NOTHING ANYWHERE AROUND H--

CRAP! I KNOW WHAT IT IS!

MAN, THAT WAS GOOD TIMING!

IF I'D BEEN A SECOND SLOWER, I'D'VE BEEN CRUSHED BENEATH IT.

OY. WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU GUYS?

DON'T ASK.

HOW ABOUT YOU?

OH...

"...NOTHING REALLY WORTH MENTIONING."

THE END?

Rod Reis

DOCTOR STRANGE: DAMNATION #2

Greg Smallwood

DOCTOR STRANGE: DAMNATION #1-4 CONNECTING VARIANTS

Ron Lim & Rachelle Rosenberg

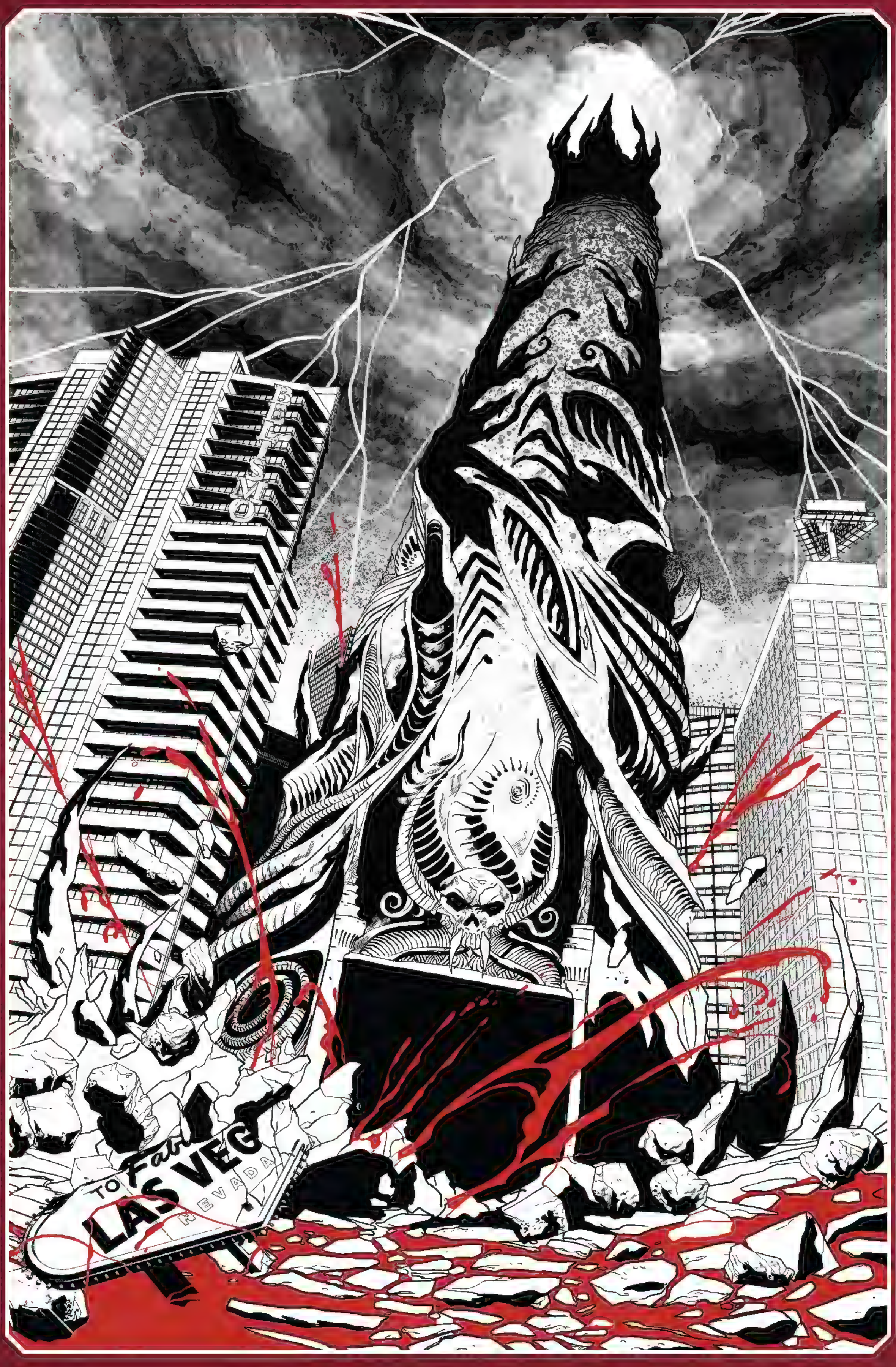
DOCTOR STRANGE: DAMNATION #2 VARIANT

Rod Reis

DOCTOR STRANGE: DAMNATION #4

Will Sliney

BEN REILLY: SCARLET SPIDER #15, PAGE 7 ART



Will Sliney

BEN REILLY: SCARLET SPIDER #15, PAGE 17 ART

Will Sliney

BEN REILLY: SCARLET SPIDER #16, PAGE 1 ART

Will Sliney

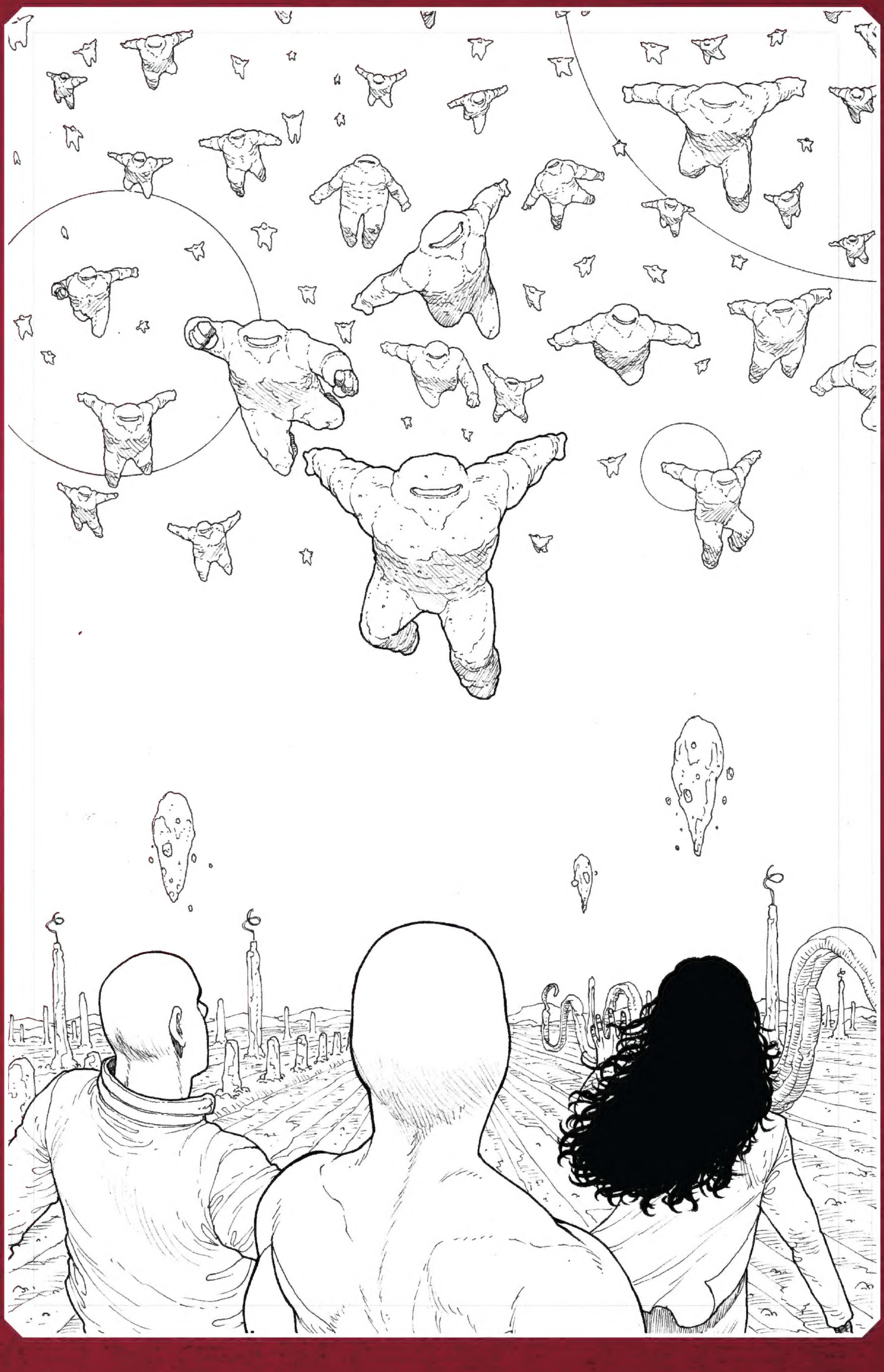
BEN REILLY: SCARLET SPIDER #17, PAGE 3 ART

Will Sliney

BEN REILLY: SCARLET SPIDER #17, PAGE 10 ART

André Lima Araújo

BEN REILLY: SCARLET SPIDER #18, PAGE 20 ART



André Lima Araújo

BEN REILLY: SCARLET SPIDER #19, PAGE 11 ART

BEN REILLY FACES DAMNATION!

AS THE DEMONIC Hotel Inferno towers above the ruined Las Vegas skyline, the Scarlet Spider allies with new friends and old enemies to battle the forces of Mephisto! Ben is the Spider-Man who can't die – the one who has slipped through Mephisto's grasp time and again. But now, the demon's obsession with the Parker clan may cost Ben more than his life! Will the King of Hell claim the soul of a certain wall-crawling, web-slinging friendly neighborhood spider-clone?! Plus: Mysterio swore he was on the straight and narrow, and Quentin Beck thought he was retired…until his daughter blew into town! Can the Scarlet Spider and the Slinger known as Dusk come between the magical Mysteria and her big score?!

COLLECTING ***BEN REILLY: SCARLET SPIDER #15-19*** –
BY PETER DAVID, WILL SLINEY, ANDRÉ LIMA ARAÚJO AND RACHELLE ROSENBERG.

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